

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1946

INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 0634

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CPRS, YO (BENTLEY, GLORIA LIND: AND WATERMAN, ANN)

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE RELEASE OF DETAINED AMCITS

REF : BELGRADE 0627

1. RADOMIR COBELJIC, CONSULAR OFFICIAL IN FEDERAL SECRETARIAT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (FSFA), SUMMONED CONSUL FOR URGENT MEETING REGARDING SUBJECTS. COBELJIC SAID: (A) IN VIEW OF VERY GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND YUGOSLAVIA, (B) CONSIDERING THE HIGH REPUTATION OF MRS. BENTLEY WHO HAS BEEN TO YUGOSLAVIA MANY TIMES WITH NO DIFFICULTIES WHATSOEVER, (C) TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION POSSIBLE EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY OF MISS WATERMAN, AND (B) BELIEVING THE LADIES' STORY THAT THEY DID NOT KNOW THE SERIOUS CONTENT OF THE DOCUMENTS THAT WERE BEING DISTRIBUTED, THE COMPETENT YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES ARE MAKING AN EFFORT TO PERMIT THEM TO LEAVE.

2. COBELJIC ADDED THAT THE MATTER IS STILL BEFORE THE INVESTIGATING JUDGE IN NOVI SAD AND THAT THE INVESTIGATION IS STILL PENDING, BUT HE HOPED THAT THESE EFFORTS WOULD LEAD TO A HAPPY CONCLUSION. HE PROMISED TO INFORM US AS SOON AS HE HAS ANY FURTHER DETAILS. COBELJIC WOULD NOT SURMISE UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS, IF ANY, THE LADIES WOULD BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE.

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3. WHEN CONSUL INFORMED COBELJIC THAT THERE WAS ALREADY

PRESS COVERAGE IN THE U.S. OF THE DETENTION, HE SAID IT WOULD PROBABLY NOT APPEAR IN THE YUGOSLAV PRESS SINCE THAT WOULD ONLY COMPLICATE MATTERS. IF IT HAS BEEN IN THE U.S. PRESS HE ADDED, PERHAPS OTHERS WHO TRAVEL TO YUGOSLAVIA WILL BE MORE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT THEY BRING INTO THE COUNTRY.

4. CONSUL WILL INFORM MRS. BENTLEY AND MISS WATERMAN TO CONTINUE TO BE PATIENT AND "HOLD TIGHT" IN HOPETHAT THIS EXTRAORDINARY ASSISTANCE BY FSFA WILL LEAD TO THEIR RELEASE.

4. COMMENT. IN VIEW OF THIS HOPEFUL DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO ADVISE ANY INTERESTED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS OR OTHERS TO WITHHOLD ACTION OR COMMENT PENDING OUTCOME.
TOON

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